

## BOOKS printed for W. REEVE.

A REVIEW of the State of the *Antediluvian* WORLD: Wherein is set forth

I. The Inconsistency of the Imagination of *Præ Adamites*.

II. From the concise Account which *Moses* gives us of the Posterity of *Adam* and *Eve*, we may easily conclude, that there were Multitudes of their Posterity on the Earth when *Cain* slew *Abel*.

III. From his succeeding Accounts may be observed that the World was pretty well Peopled even in the Days of *Adam*.

IV. How decay'd Religion was revived by *Seth*.

V. That it was continued in the *Patriarchs* in the Line to *Noah*.

VI. How the Degeneracy from Religion spread, and of the *Antediluvian Giants*, and of the *Sons of God* marrying the *Daughters of Men*, &c.

VII. The Goodness of God in putting a Stop, by an universal Deluge, to those monstrous Violences that universal Wickednesses had occasioned.

To which is added, A short DISCOURSE upon the Preaching of *Christ* to the *Spirits in Prison*, which were sometimes disobedient in the Days of *Noah*, &c.

The PREFACE, containing Directions how the Historical Parts of the Scriptures ought to be looked upon; and that That Part of the Scriptures, which contains *Laws* and *Precepts*, has not been so capable of Corruptions by Transcribers, and how to judge of Corruptions by *Commentators*, &c.

All which being carefully observed, will make the *Sacred Writings* appear in their truest Lustre.

By BENJAMIN PARKER, Author of the *Philosophical Meditations*, *Philosophical Dissertations*, *Survey of the six Days Work of the Creation*, &c.

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clear View of the first *Triumvirate*. Trans-  
lated from the *French*.

No 16

*Conversion founded on Conviction of  
Sin.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached in the  
Parish-Church of *All-Saints*,

I N  
N O R T H A M P T O N,

O N  
Sunday, *October 30*, 1748.

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By *THOMAS HARTLEY*, A. M.  
Rector of *Winwick* in *Northamptonshire*.

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Published at the earnest Solicitation of Several  
who heard it.

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*The Kingdom of GOD is not in WORD, but in POWER,*  
I Cor. iv. 20.

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L O N D O N:

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THE  
P R E F A C E.



*THE following Sermon, which was the hasty Production of a broken Week, is, contrary both to my Intention and Inclination, wrested from me to make its Appearance in Publick, by the Request of several that heard it, and some of my Friends, with an Importunity I could not resist.*

*I must*

*I must not dissemble another Reason which has been urged for its Publication, viz. That the Tendency of it was misunderstood, or misrepresented, by some of the Hearers: At which others were much surprized, since it appeared to them, as it must to every candid Reader, that no Discourse could be more entirely free from the malignant Leaven of a Party-Spirit; against the very Appearance of which, I think myself obliged in Conscience to guard; especially at those Seasons, when it would be nothing less than a Prophanation of the Pulpit, and defeat the Success of the best intended Addresses from it. And therefore I take this Opportunity of declaring once for all, That I cannot but look upon the Bigotry and Malevolence with which PARTY-DISTINCTIONS, both in Church and State, have been so often prosecuted on all Sides amongst us, as the Bane of good Neighbourhood, a Disgrace to Protestantism, and an Abomination most contrary to the whole Genius and Design of Christianity; from which therefore every good Man, and more particularly every Christian Minister, should be tenderly solicitous to keep himself unspotted. — By this Maxim I strive to regulate my Conduct, as well as my Preaching; the constant Tenor of which is, Repentance from dead Works,*

*Works, Faith in our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the other essential Parts of true Religion, as laid down in the Gospel of PEACE: And from a strict Adherence to these Rules, GOD being my Helper, neither the Hope of Favour, nor the Fear of Displeasure, from any Quarter whatever, shall discourage me.*

*I think proper to premise here, That this Sermon in general has Respect to those nominal Christians, who have led careless, worldly, or wicked Lives; and not to the Case of those happy Persons, who have attained to advanced Degrees of Godliness, by a gradual Progress in the Christian Life from their Youth upward: As also, That if I had been desirous of establishing a Reputation for Depth of Reasoning, Delicacy of Style, or Politeness of Address, I should on no Terms have permitted so plain a Discourse to make such a publick Appearance. Some perhaps may despise it for want of Ornaments of that Kind; — Ornaments, which yet on some Occasions it may be Wisdom to avoid: And if in this artless Form it be fitter to promote the GOOD of SOULS, (which I desire much more than FAME,) it will be an ample Recompence. The Eagerness of Attention with which it was heard by a crouded Audience, the good Reception it met with from the Generality of them,*

*them, and the Opinion of several judicious Friends as to the Probability of its future Usefulness, encourage me to hope, that it may be the Means of producing some valuable Effects thro' the Concurrence of the Divine Blessing, to which I humbly recommend it.*





ACTS ii. 37.

*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their Heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, What shall we do ?*



WE have an Account in this Chapter of three Thousand Souls being converted to the Faith of CHRIST in one Day, by the Preaching of the Apostles. A glorious Beginning of the Work of GOD on the Hearts of Sinners! A convincing Demonstration of the Power of the HOLY GHOST; which now, according to our SAVIOUR'S Promise, descended upon his Embassadors, and rendered their Ministry effectual to the Conversion of many more Thousands in all Parts of the known World: So  
B mightily

*mightily grew the Word of GOD, and prevailed\**, under the Conduct and Influence of this Heavenly Dispenser !

The miraculous Descent of the HOLY GHOST being noised abroad throughout *Jerusalem*, great Numbers flocked to the Temple, many of them doubtless led by a natural Curiosity to see so extraordinary a Sight. Now there happened to be present in this mixt Multitude *Jews* of fifteen different Nations and Countries, who in Obedience to the Law of *Moses* were come up to *Jerusalem* to the Feast : For though from the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity they were dispersed almost over the Face of the whole Earth, yet they religiously kept the Passover at *Jerusalem* ; and many stayed there till after the Feast of Pentecost, which was instituted in Memory of the Delivery of the Law on Mount *Sinai*.

*Peter* being moved by the HOLY GHOST, takes Occasion from this great Concourse of People to preach unto them CHRIST a SAVIOUR ; to prove to them from their own Scriptures, that the same JESUS whom they had crucified was the *Messiah* therein foretold ; and to insist upon his Resurrection from the Dead, and Exaltation at the Right Hand of GOD. Upon which we read, that *they*, i. e. such of them as believed, were pricked in their Hearts, and said, Men and Bre-

\* Acts xix. 20.

*Brethren, What shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the HOLY GHOST.—And with many other Words did he testify and exhort.*

Now here it is observable, 1<sup>st</sup>, How GOD Almighty makes use of Natural, in conjunction with Supernatural Causes, to bring about the gracious Effect of Gospel-Salvation; and by a wonderful Cast of his Providence improves the most common, and to us seemingly accidental Occurrences, to the Manifestation of his Power and Glory. Thus, out of a mixt Multitude, brought together by meer natural Curiosity, to see some new Thing, no less than three Thousand Souls were caught in the Net of the Gospel, by those *Fishers of Men*, as our SAVIOUR forenamed the Apostles. And I doubt not but many a one, who has come to Church upon no better a Principle, has been caught in like manner, and been *pricked to the Heart*, where he only expected Entertainment for the Ear.

2<sup>dly</sup>. We may learn hence, that the LORD hath appointed the Ordinance of *Preaching*, as the most general and effectual Means of making Converts to CHRIST, even in Preference to *Miracles*. And were it possible to make the Calculation, I doubt not, but for one Person profelyted to Christianity by

the Miracles wrought by the Hands of the Apostles, Hundreds were brought over by their Preaching: Nay, it is plainly declared, that a Miracle would be ineffectual where Preaching is unprofitable. *If they will not bear Moses and the Prophets, (for they were preached to the Jews every Sabbath Day,) neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the Dead\**. Now, who will say, that the Gospel of CHRIST, which has brought Life and Immortality to light with clearer Evidence than was ever done before, is not as powerful a Means of Conviction as the Law and the Prophets?—Besides, Miracles declare no Truth; they only bear Testimony to the Mission and Authority of him that works them, and so become the Seal of his Commission; whereas Preaching is the Commission itself: And therefore, the outward Evidence and Authority of Christianity being once established, the Work of Conversion was thenceforward to rest upon Preaching, by a standing Ordinance in the Church of CHRIST for ever.

But the carnal Reasoner, ever wise in his own Conceit, will be ready to ask, If *Reading* will not do the Business full as well? Are there not as good Sermons in Print, as any that are Preached? And therefore, may we not receive as good Improvement in our Closets, as at Church?

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\* Luke xvi. 31.

I answer, that Reading even the best Books, however excellent a Means of Knowledge in its proper Place, will not do so well under the Neglect of Gospel-Preaching, where People have the Opportunity of attending on it. We have no Warrant to set up this or that Method of Improvement, in Opposition to a Divine Command. Faith and Grace are the free Gifts of God, which he will bestow upon his own Terms: And if he has been pleased to annex these to Preaching, in Conjunction with other Ordinances, what hast thou to reply? Follow God in his own Way, if thou hopest to obtain the Blessing.

When *Elisha* directed *Naaman* to go and wash in *Jordan* seven Times, with a Promise that he should be cleansed of his Leprosy, the conceited *Syrian*, like these Self-Willers, was for being Healed his own Way, or not at all: *Are not*, says he, *Abana and Pharpar Rivers of Damascus, better than all the Waters of Israel*\*? And better Rivers perhaps they might be; but yet he might have washed in them seventy Times seven, and not have found his Cure. In like Manner, the three Thousand that were converted on the Day of Pentecost, and the *Eunuch* that was going down to *Æthiopia* in his Chariot, might have *read* all their Lives long, without attaining to a saving Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, if he had not brought the former  
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\* 2 Kings v. 12.

to hear *St. Peter*, and sent *Philip* to preach to the latter.

But to come to the particular Effect which *St. Peter's* Preaching had upon his Hearers, as expressed in the Verse of the Text: *They were pricked in their Heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do?*

An undiscerning Reader may be led by two Passages in this Chapter, to suppose that the Compunction of Heart here spoken of, was owing to their having had a Hand in shedding the Blood of *CHRIST*; forasmuch as the Apostle seems to lay this to their Charge: As in the Verse preceding the Text, *Let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that GOD hath made that same JESUS whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST.* But the Accusation lies only against *them* in general, as *Jews*, and of the same Kindred and Religion with those that had perpetrated this horrid Fact; and is not levelled at *them* in particular. For several of them came from afar, just in the Juncture of this Transaction; and were probably unacquainted with the Person and Doctrine of our *LORD*, and with the Proceedings of the Rulers against him at the Time of his Condemnation.

The Use I would make of the foregoing Observation is this, That the *pricking of the Heart* here spoken of, was not on Account  
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of their being *Jews*, but Sinners; and as such, liable to the Wrath and Vengeance of Almighty God: And the inward Remorse and Anguish of Soul which they felt at this Time, was the Power of the SPIRIT of God working in them; whose Office we are told it is, to *convince the World of Sin*\*. It was a Stroke of the same Sword, which smote St. *Paul* to the Heart at his Conversion, when *trembling and astonished* he first owned CHRIST for his SAVIOUR, and cried out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do* †? And which, upon the like Occasion, pierced the *Jailor* to the Quick, when he so hastily addressed *Paul* and *Silas* in the Prison, with, *Sirs what must I do to be saved* ‡? — Nor is the SPIRIT less mighty in its Operations now, than it was then: The Word of God is still *quick and powerful*, and when sent home to the Heart by an Impulse of Divine Grace, does as fully convince, and effectually reform, as if it came out of the Mouth of St. *Peter*, or St. *Paul*.

And here I am led to speak a Word of *sudden Conversions*. It must indeed be allowed, that Cases of this Nature are not so frequent now, as they were in the Times of the Apostles. — They might then be Necessary, to answer the Design of the speedy Propagation of Christianity; and the Rapidity of the Progress which the Gospel made upon  
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\* John xvi. 8. † Acts ix. 6. ‡ Acts xvi. 30.

its first Entrance into the World, afforded among many others a strong Proof of its Divinity.—Besides, The Benefit of an early Education in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and constant Opportunities of attending on the Means of Grace, are Advantages which we enjoy, but they did not : And therefore it is, that the Business of Religion is now suffered to be carried on by more gradual Advances in the Soul, and as it were Step by Step; whereas Numbers of *them* were usually profelyted to the Faith at one Time by a single Sermon : So that *the Kingdom of GOD. or the Coming of the Son of Man* in the Gospel Dispensation, might well be compared to *Lightning, which cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West\**; so quickly did the Light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, coming from the Eastern, diffuse itself over the Western Parts of the World. — But tho' it be confessed, that the Work of GOD is not usually carried on now, with the same Dispatch as formerly ; yet to deny that there are any Instances of sudden Conversions, nay to say that there are not many, is to contradict the Experience of Numbers, who have been *awakened all at once* by the SPIRIT of GOD under the Ministry of the Word, and stirred up by a wonderful and inexplicable Influence on their Souls, to enquire, *What they shall do to be saved?*

I know,

\* Matt. xxiv. 27.

I know, that Experimental Religion has long been under much Discredit with us: And I am sorry for it; for it is, among others, a sad Argument of the great Decay of Godliness that is amongst us.

A great Part of *Protestants* are become very *Papists*, without knowing it; they are for going to Heaven in the Way of an outward Worship, and for sacrificing to God of that which costs them little or nothing. Forms and Ceremonies, and some external Works, consist well enough with inward Impurity, and offer no Violence to corrupt Nature; and therefore they are well content to be Religious at so cheap a Rate. But do not, my Brethren, thus deceive your own Souls; for this is building a Tower which cannot reach unto Heaven, for *its Foundation is in the Dust*. If you would be in reality what you pretend to be, you must dig deeper, and lay the Foundation lower. The polluted Fountain must be cleansed, and the deadly Waters thereof healed by the Salt of a true and anguishing Repentance\*. Neither will

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\* I would by no Means be understood here, as *limiting* the Divine Being to any particular Method of Operation: For I am verily persuaded, that there have been many Instances of sincere Conversion, where the Anguish of Repentance may have been swallowed up immediately in a joyful Sense of pardoning Grace; yet I believe, enough is generally, if not universally felt, to vindicate the Expression I have used. — And I must seriously warn Persons, who are most ready to blame such Kind of Language, to take heed of encouraging the premature Joys of those, who may prove no more than Stony-Ground Hearers.

a Partial Reformation make us real Christians: This is only lopping off the Boughs and Branches from the Tree of Evil, which will sprout again the more: But we must lay *the Axe to the Root of the Tree*, and down with it even to the Ground: We must repent and turn unto the Lord with deep Humiliation, that he may *make us clean Hearts, and renew a right Spirit within us* †.

But Sorrow and Sadness are Things so contrary to the Bent of our Nature, and lie so cross to every Appetite and Inclination of Flesh and Blood, that few People can bear to hear of *Mourning* \* and *Mortification* † in Religion. — We are called *the Troublers of Israel*, as *Abab* stiled *Elijah* ||, when we insist upon these Doctrines; or else are reproached with *bringing an evil Report upon the good Land*, by giving such a discouraging Representation of it. But this we cannot help; for we must take Human Nature as we find it, and Religion as we find it; and be content with such Remedies for our Misery, as Sin has made necessary.

Had Man continued in his first Estate, and all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam* preserved their Innocence; in that Case, to talk of Sorrow would have been bringing strange Things to their Ears, for nothing but the *Voice of Joy* would have been known in *the Dwellings of the Righteous* §. But this

† Psal. li. 10.  
Col. iii. 5.

\* Matt. v. 4.

† Rom. viii. 13

|| 1 Kings xviii. 17.

§ Psal. cxviii. 15

[ 11 ]

is not the Case with us now ; for Sin has deeply infected our Nature : And Sin is the Parent of Sorrow, and Evangelical Sorrow a sovereign Means for its Cure.—Say not then to us, *Speak unto us smooth Things\**, and preach them *smoothly* : For we must suit our Discourses to your Needs, and not to your Likings ; and therefore are frequently call'd upon in Duty to speak sharp Things, and to speak them sharply, if so by any Means we may *prick you to the Heart*, and bring you to cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?*

But it may be ask'd here, Why God Almighty hath made the Burden of Sin so heavy, and the Work of Conversion so piercing to the Soul of the Penitent ? I answer,

*First*, That he doth this in Grace and Goodness, to divorce our Hearts from Sin; by giving us a feeling Sense of the Bitterness and Evil that is in it.—All the Arguments and Persuasions in the World would be insufficient to prevail with us to forsake our sinful Lusts and wicked Ways, if we were not to smart for them; if we were not to be humbled under the Remembrance of them, and to be terrified at the Sight of that Defilement which they have brought upon the Soul, and its Danger on that Account.

*Secondly*, This painful Sense of Sin and its Malignity, brings us to see our Need of

\* Isai. xxx. 10.

a SAVIOUR, and teaches us to prize the Benefit of our Redemption by his Blood. People may talk of CHRIST with seeming Reverence, and profess to believe in him with a Shew of Sincerity ; but he is only sweet and amiable to the Sin-sick Soul. As Liberty to the Captive, and Sight to the Blind, so is CHRIST truly precious to the labouring and heavy laden Penitent. Grace then truly appears Grace, when Sin appears to be Sin. — Whilst we think ourselves in Safety, and all to be well with us, in a vain Confidence of its own Sufficiency the Heart of Man is apt to cry out, as the Devils did, *What have I to do with thee, Jesus !* But when the Soul is made truly sensible of its Sin and Misery, and finds itself sinking in the deep Waters, it then flieth unto JESUS for Help, and with *Peter* crieth out, *L O R D save me, or I perish \* !*

*Thirdly*, Inward Suffering and Compunction on Account of Sin, disposes the Heart for Grace, and makes it both receptive and retentive of its Impressions. It breaks up the fallow Ground, and mollifies the stony Heart, and gives free Access to the Word of the LORD. On a Soil thus prepared, the Dew of Heavenly Grace and Instruction descends as Rain into a Fleece of Wool.

What is the Reason, that the Word preached is attended with so little Profit to the Souls

\* Matt. xiv. 30.

Souls of many ; insomuch that neither the Promises nor the Threatnings, neither the Mercies nor the Judgments of the LORD, as set forth by us, have any more Effect upon such, to bring them nearer to God, than the Whistling of the Wind ? Or if our Sermons are listened to, and perhaps the Style or Matter of them commended, yet *they are unto them but as a lovely Song of one that bath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument ; for they hear the Words, but do them not.* Ezek. xxxiii. 32. What, I say, is the Reason of this, but because you have hardened your Hearts as Flints, so that the keenest Arrows from the Quiver, though aim'd aright, cannot pierce them. The Word, like the Seed that fell upon stony Ground, gains no Admittance into them ; and as it taketh no Root downward, so neither can it bring forth Fruit upward. Your Consciences are yet unawakened ; you are yet in a State of Spiritual Death : May the God of Strength supply the Defect of his Ordinances, and break the Gates of Brass, and smite the Bars of Iron asunder, that JESUS may enter into his Temple, and dwell there !

But perhaps, there are other Reasons that come in for a Share in the Cause of our Unsuccessfulness.—You see, that we are Men of like Passions and Infirmities with yourselves, and have not yet attained to that  
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Pitch of Perfection which we preach to others: But let not that prejudice you against the Means of your own Perfection. We feel and lament our Weakness and Unworthiness, and we confess our great Need of Forgiveness at the Hands of God, and our Need of your Prayers to God for us: But yet, to such as we are, is a Dispensation committed, and *Woe be to us, if we preach not the Gospel\**. And tho' you have *this Treasure in earthen Vessels†*, yet despise not the Riches of the former, on account of the Meanness of the latter. You cannot have *Angels* for your Ministers; and if you could, the Matter, perhaps, would not be so much mended as you suppose; for it is not the Instrument, but the Power and Blessing of God going along with it, that must effect your Conversion: Besides, those pure and spotless Beings, as they have no Defilement in their Nature, and experience no Corruption in their Hearts, so neither could they speak so feelingly and affectingly to yours. This however is certain, that tho' *they are ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation‡*, yet unto us, and not unto them, *is committed the Ministry of Reconciliation||*; and accordingly, tho' an Angel was sent from Heaven to *Cornelius* to comfort him, yet he was directed to send for *St. Peter*, to hear the Word of God at his Mouth§. Now then, though weak and unworthy

\* 1 Cor. ix. 16. † 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‡ Heb. i. 14.

|| 2 Cor v. 18. § Acts x. 5, 6.

unworthy, yet we are *Embassadors for CHRIST*, as though *GOD* did beseech you by us; we pray you therefore in *CHRIST's* stead, be ye reconciled to *GOD*. 2 Cor. v. 20.

But, *Lastly*, Perhaps (for we must be content to bear Reproach,) some of you will say, that *by this Craft we have our Wealth\**, and that it is our Profession and Livelihood to say these Things, though we believe them not ourselves. But do not, my Brethren, go on by the Help of studied Objections to *reject the Counsel of GOD against yourselves†*, and to harden your Hearts in Unbelief: For we speak that we do know, and testify that we have felt; for our Faith is not founded on meer moral Persuasion, but on inward Conviction, and supported by Reason, by Scripture, by Experience.

That none enter into the *Priest's Office* nor continue in it, for the Sake of *Bread*, I cannot say: But this I am bold to say, that there are many amongst us, who would preach the same Truths, and with the same Earnestness, though you were to give them Stones instead of Bread.

I shall now conclude with such an *Application*, as may suit the two different Characters of my Hearers, *viz.* those who have been *pricked to the Heart*, and those who have not.

And

\* Acts xix. 25. † Luke vii. 30.

And *first*, to those who were never yet *pricked to the Heart*, and thereby led to cry out, *What must we do to be saved?* And whereas the *Word of GOD* has been *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword* † to others, it has not had one Edge for them; to whom the Scriptures are but as *a sealed Book*, or *a Tale that is told*; Preaching but as *sounding Brass*; receiving the Sacrament nothing better than eating Bread and drinking Wine; and the Whole of Religious Worship but a Set of dull dry Forms, without Spirit and without Life: Who are diligent Seekers after the Things of this Life, constant Enquirers, What shall we do to be *rich*? What shall we do to gain the Favour of Men, or to *make Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof*?—But, What shall we do to obtain the Pardon of our Sins? What shall we do to gain an Interest in CHRIST, and that our Lot may be among the Saints? These are Interrogatories, so faintly, if at all, insisted on, as plainly shews, that the Care of their Souls is the least of their Concern.

If any such be here, as I fear there are in so great a Congregation, How shall I address you? Shall I *speak smooth Things*, and *daub with untemper'd Mortar*\*? Shall I *sew Pillows* to your Arms, that so you may sleep on securely? God forbid, that I should be thus unfaithful to my Trust, and such an Enemy to your

† Heb. iv. 12. \* Ezek. xiii. 10.

your Souls! Bear then with my Plainness, whilst I tell you what I think of you; for though my Heart is full of Tenderness and Pity for you, yet my Voice must be a *Voice of Terror* to you. I think then, be you never so rich, or great, or jocund, that you are of all Men most miserable; and I would not be in your Condition for Ten Thousand Worlds; for if you die in your unconverted State, there is not a single Text in Scripture that gives you Hopes of escaping *the Damnation of Hell*. How can you close your Eyes to sleep, when you know not but you may open them in everlasting Burnings? How can you walk the Streets without Fear, when even a Tile falling from a House may for ever separate you from all Possibility of working out your own Salvation? for all Nature, the Elements, and every Creature, is in a State of Hostility with the Man that lives at Enmity with GOD. Flee then for your Lives, O Sinners; flee for your Souls.—But whither shall you flee? for the horrible Pit openeth wide her Mouth before you; the Avenger of Blood-pursues you at your Heels, and the Terrors of the LORD are on your Right Hand and on your Left.—But yet there is a Way to escape: Flee to the LORD JESUS CHRIST in the lively Exercise of Repentance and Faith, and He *will* deliver you; for *He hath the Keys of Hell and of Death,*

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*and shutteth and no Man openeth\**. He is the true City of Refuge from the Avenger of Blood: And in Him GOD is no longer a *consuming Fire*, but disarm'd of his Terrors; for in *CHRIST* He is a *reconciled GOD*, full of Peace and Love.

And now, may this *Foolishness of Preaching* be unto you a Means of Spiritual Wisdom! May the LORD give Power to the Word of his Grace, and send it home with a Divine Efficacy to your Hearts, that you may be pricked to the Quick, and with a solicitous Earnestness about Soul-Concerns, cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?* May the Strong Man of Sin now in Possession of the House, and whose Goods are in Peace †, have his Foundations shaken, and the Walls wherein he trusted be as a tottering Fence! May the Devil be cast out, though it be with rending and tearing! And may that Scripture be fulfilled in you: *Ye were without CHRIST, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenant of Promise, having no Hope, and without GOD in the World; but now in CHRIST JESUS, ye who some time were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of CHRIST ‡.*

I shall conclude with a Word to those, who have felt the Power of Gospel-Ordinances, sent home to their Hearts by the HOLY SPIRIT, to convince them of Sin; and

\* Rev. i. 18. iii. 7. † Luke ix. 21. ‡ Eph. ii. 12, 13.

and who come to CHRIST *labouring and heavy laden* under the Remembrance and Burden of it, crying out, *LORD, What shall we do to inherit Eternal Life?* And now, my Brethren, to such as you are, I heartily bid *GOD speed*, and wish you *good Luck in the Name of the LORD*. You have turned your Backs on Sin and the World, and set your Faces Heavenward: Go on and prosper, for *the promised Land* is in full View before you; and though the Entrance into it be somewhat difficult, yet *be not dismayed*, neither afraid of the *Canaanite*, nor yet of the *Swellings of Jordan*; for the Waters shall divide that you may pass over in Safety, and under the Command and Conduct of your spiritual *Joshua*, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST, you shall shortly see the victorious Banner of the Cross displayed on the Battlements of *Jericho*. Convictions for Sin are indeed troublesome, but Insensibility in Sin is infinitely dangerous. A wounded Conscience is painful, but a benumbed and hardened Conscience is destructive. Bear then the Chastisement of the LORD, not only with Patience, but Thankfulness; *for whom the LORD loveth, he so chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth\**: So shall your *Sickness be not unto Death, but for the Glory of GOD, that the Son of GOD may be glorified thereby†*.

And

\* Heb. xii. 6.    † John xi. 4.

And now, my dear Brethren, I have delivered to you *a Message of Life and Death*; and how am I pained for you, lest you should chuse amiss? But God forbid, that you should chuse Destruction, and refuse Conversion! May He direct you in your Choice, and supply the Defects of his Messengers by the All-powerful Working of his SPIRIT, that you may be *pricked in your Hearts*, and cry, *What shall we do to be saved?*

And may the God of Heaven incline his Ear unto your Cry, and help you, when you call upon him! May the LORD JESUS CHRIST wash away your Sins with his most precious Blood! And may you be perfected through the Sanctification of the HOLY GHOST, that you may obtain the eternal Salvation of your Souls! Even so grant, LORD JESUS! *Amen, and Amen.*



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